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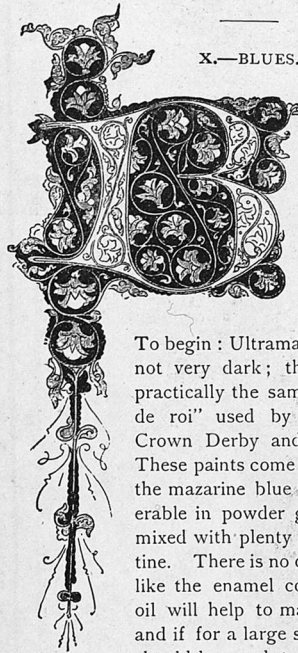
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# China Painting.

LESSONS BY A PRACTICAL DECORATOR.



## X.—BLUES.

BLUES of deep hues, found on the finest decorated wares both ancient and modern, are known by a variety of names, but more really useful to the amateur are the ones described herein.

To begin: Ultramarine is a rich color, but not very dark; the mazarine blues are practically the same color as the "Bleu de roi" used by the Sèvres, Chelsea, Crown Derby and Worcester factories. These paints come in tubes and powders; the mazarine blue is, on the whole, preferable in powder ground very finely and mixed with plenty of fat oil and turpentine. There is no danger of its blistering like the enamel colors; a little lavender oil will help to make it work smoothly, and if for a large surface a tinting brush should be used, to lay it on quickly and evenly, but not too thickly. All china before it is glazed is called biscuit, in which state it has a dry, smooth surface, and will absorb the paint almost the instant it is applied. The same heat that develops the carmines will answer for the first firing of this blue. It then comes from the kiln dull in color—almost black, and requires a coat of glaze to impart richness and depth. The glaze can be purchased with the paints; two pounds will answer for all ordinary purposes.

To apply it, take a vessel that will hold water enough to allow the article to be immersed in it. Fill it nearly full of water. Stir enough of the glaze into it until it becomes the consistency of cream, then plunge the article to be glazed into the liquid, taking care to hold it so that the glaze is not prevented from covering all the parts requiring it; but it must be wiped off those portions that are to be gilded, with a dry cloth.

If this be found too difficult a process, mix the glaze on a plate with water or half skim milk and water, and apply it with a brush. Do not make it too thick, or it will run in the firing. To lay on glazing properly requires some little practice; but it can be wiped off and put on a second and even third time if necessary. The heat needed to bring the glaze to a state of perfection is called "glaze-kiln" heat, and is much greater than the heat required for enamel colors. This process is rarely attempted except in large factories and is rather beyond the reach of amateurs. Nevertheless, it is possible to fire it in an ordinary charcoal kiln; but the temperature must be maintained for fully ten minutes after it has reached a white heat. Of course a kiln receiving a number of such extreme firings will very soon give out.

If the article is to be gilded it must have still another firing. Bright liquid gold can be clouded on the blue, and burnished gold on the parts cleaned off, while unfluxed gold can be worked in a design upon it, or raised paste can be used with this beautiful color. After decorating a few articles one can see very easily why specimens always command a high price.

Sometimes a coat of glaze is applied to an article in the biscuit, and after it has dried, which it does in a very few moments, the glaze is wiped or rather rubbed off to a great extent with a clean cloth, as of course it is impossible to remove it entirely, nor is it necessary. The result in this process is known as a "slip glaze." The design can then be painted in with the Lacroix colors, and the background bossed. This must not be done on the design unless it is to be of a darker tone of the same color, for it will sink into the glaze and cannot be removed. When fired the painting has a very high glaze and at the same time almost the softness of underglaze. If two coats of bright liquid gold be put upon this semi-glaze ware, it will have the appearance of a rich matt gold. A plaque or vase painted in this way, with pink roses on a dull gold ground, is very beautiful, and it has the advantage of coming finished from the kiln, for it does not require burnishing like the ordinary matt gold.

Very satisfactory results can be obtained from unglazed plates bought from the factories. First coat them with slip glaze, then give a coat of fat oil, and tint with either Delft or Sèvres blue, finishing them by a design worked all over in the full strength of the color. Such decoration should be outlined with gold or black, and is as applicable to cups and saucers as to plates. This style of painting demands a good strong heat a little above that used for ordinary colors.

If dark blue Lacroix enamel color has the *slightest* touch of mazarine blue mixed with it and one-eighth of glaze added, it will make, when outlined with gold, a very effective color for a border. I would advise making a test of this before using the mazarine, for it is so strong a color that one is apt to use too much. No one has ever been able to make a blue for enamel colors that would correspond with these underglaze ones; such a discovery would bring with it a fortune. Dark blue mixed with one-eighth of crimson purple is something



AUTUMN. WEDGWOOD FAÏENCE.

near in tone; but it is difficult always to get the exact proportions, so that the artist is often disappointed.

Dark blue, or Sèvres blue, is used a great deal for backgrounds for small flowers done in the Dresden style. Directions to use these dry colors for grounds were given in the last number of this magazine.

Old blue, although it has not the transparent effect or richness of color of the underglaze, is a very good substitute for enamel painting and very extensively used for a solid body. It is sold in tubes, like all the Lacroix colors. When placed upon the palette it must be mixed with lavender oil instead of turpentine, and made the same consistency as for ordinary flower painting. If an article is to be covered all over, use a large flat brush to lay the color on, making it as even and smooth as possible. It should then be dried thoroughly in an oven when it is possible, and then another coat should be applied with a light quick touch or the first will be washed up. If it is thus damaged, it will be almost impossible to restore the places so that they do not show after firing. It should not be laid on thickly, or it will either run or else dry in ridges. Lavender oil must always be used, for if omitted the paint will be apt to flake off in firing.

Each time that fresh color is taken from the tube use the lavender oil; but turpentine can be employed to keep the paint open and pliable, as in ordinary painting. After the article is fired, a design in gold can be worked upon it. The gold must have two coats, or the flux in the paint will be absorbed and made to look very weak, so that it will be almost impossible to burnish it.

A cream pitcher and sugar-bowl decorated in this fashion make a charming effect, almost equal to such as is got by underglaze painting. They should have solid gold handles, and be gold-clouded quite deep on the insides, with the edge cleaned off and a narrow band of gold put on.

A pleasing effect can be produced by choosing a design in which the same decorative motives are repeated. Paint the principal ones in blue outlined with gold or black, and the rest in solid gold. If it is all done in one

firing bring the gold close up to the blue, but not over it. Two border decorations were given in the October number of *The Art Amateur* that would be very suitable for this kind of ornamentation.

Bread and butter or dessert plates, painted with a small conventional design in their centres made from combinations of the details of the borders, would entirely repay one for the labor.

Sometimes a little capucine red can be introduced into the details of borders in combination with the blue and gold, giving the effect of Crown Derby decoration.

There are a large number of blues in the catalogues of most manufacturers, but only a few of them are necessary for ordinary painting. Dark blue is rich in color and is used for almost all blue flowers done in the Dresden style. It mixes with all the carmines and purples and violet of gold. In fact, crimson purple and one-third, or even a little less, will make a color equal to the violet of golds, although much less expensive. Just in proportion to the colors used, so the blue or violet will predominate. Deep ultramarine is a very beautiful color. That it may not become paler very little flux is used. To make it take any glaze at all, it must receive a very hard firing, much more than for those colors that are ordinarily used with one-third flux.

Victoria blue is the cheapest of all the blues, and can be made to take the place of dark blue, although it is not so bright or so rich a color. If mixed with chrome green No. 3 and black, a brilliant peacock green can be obtained, which is valuable for painting feathers and breasts of birds. It can be made with green or blue predominating as required, but, for fear of making the color dull, use very little black.

Turquoise blue is a rather delicate bright blue, very good for blue flowers and for tinting. It mixes with all the carmines. When shaded with gray No. 1, it makes a lilac that can be used in painting drapery.

Turquoise green is really a blue green very much the color of a robin's egg. It is pretty in combination with gold for small figures or tinting.

Of all the blues for flower painting and tinting, deep blue green is the most trustworthy to employ, as it always fires well, so that out of hundreds of pieces there will never be one failure. It is not a green, as the name would indicate, but a soft exquisite blue with just enough of a green tinge to take away the harsh cold look of the turquoise blues. When mixed with violet of iron it gives the purplish tone often seen on the backs of rose leaves.

A bright artistic border can be made by using this blue for the figures, with rather a light tone of carnation No. 1 and gold. It is the color of the azure that is generally used in emblazoning in coats-of-arms, in combination with capucine red.

If I could only have two blues, my choice would be dark blue and deep blue green, for they will answer for almost everything. Celestial blue is a pretty color and often employed for grounding with oil in the dry powder, as well as for tinting, but unfortunately when used with acids the color changes; for that reason it is untrustworthy for table use. Sky blue is a very light shade, and not, strictly speaking, a pure blue, for it has a lavender tone. It must be painted in with a strong coat, for it has a great deal of flux, which causes the color to disappear in the firing. A good substitute for this color in painting skies can be made with a very little gray No. 1 mixed with deep blue green, or for a darker tone a mixture of dark blue and gray.

Blues and yellows are seldom used to make greens, as they yield neutral tones instead of warm bright ones.

For the deep blue greens required in marine painting, take dark blue mixed with deep blue Lacroix color and a touch of green No. 7, or better still, use dark blue and Hancock's shade green which comes in the dry powder, and is mixed with fat oil and turpentine. If then a yellow tone is needed, add a little silver yellow.

Almost any of the blues, excepting old blue, will mix with the browns or the grays for drapery.

Dark blue should always be mixed with one-third of black, when it is laid in with the brush, to give it depth of color. A very pretty decoration for a set of cups can be obtained by tinting them with deep blue green, leaving a border of half an inch or more of the plain white china at the top. Paint a plain band of gold or a row of dots at the top of the blue, and then on the white work a delicate design in red gold. Cover the handles with solid green gold. The tinting can be dried so that it will not spoil the gold in working and allow the piece to be completed in one firing.

M. B. ALING.